House Refuses To OK DA Funds

5/22/67

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—The Louisiana House today rejected an effort to appropriate $50,000 to Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison to help defray the cost of his investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy.

The attempt was made by Rep. Risley Triche of Assumption Parish during debate over the general appropriations bill.

Triche said that he was asking for the funds following discussions with intermediaries of Garrison. He told the House that the $50,000 figure was the sum discussed.

Triche, who apparently caught the New Orleans House delegation unaware, said he primarily was concerned about the use of private funds to finance a criminal investigation by the district attorney's office.

REP. SALVADOR Anzelmo said that appropriation of $50,000 to the district attorney for the investigation would not eliminate the private fund source.

Garrison has been receiving aid from a group of wealthy private citizens to whom he turned in a move to avoid having to account for expenditures of public money shortly after his investigation was disclosed by the States-Item.

The House, sitting as a committee of the whole in debating the appropriations bill, voted 66 to 31 against letting Garrison have the money. Since the group was in committee, there was no record vote taken.

(Turn to Page 8, Column 4)

Continued from Front Page

HOWEVER, ON THE basis of green lights, it was obvious that the Orleans delegation was split over the amendment.

Triche brought up his amendment when the section of the general appropriations bill covering a $681,100 appropriation for district attorneys in the state, including $84,000 for the Orleans district attorney, came up for consideration.

It drew immediate opposition from an administration floor leader, Rep. Robert Munson, Rapides, who was handling the bill for Gov. John McKeithen.

Munson declared that he was opposed to the grounds that the current budget only forecasts a surplus of $57,000 in the general fund and the amendment would leave only $7,000—a figure he considered much too close.

REP. FORD STINSON of Bossier, recalling the fight Garrison once had with the Legislature, asked Triche:

"Isn't that the same fellow that says the Legislature is a bunch of crooks? Will he use it to investigate Kennedy or us?"

Triche responded, "I want to ask you not to engage in personalities over this very serious matter. It foretells dangers of impartial administration of justice."

Munson said, "I object to the amendment primarily for one reason: It is the same man who called you and me a bunch of crooks. I have a mind like an elephant myself.

"**I HAVE NO USE** for Mr. Jim Garrison, but that's not the reason for my objection."

Then he related the plight of state finances.

When Triche took the floor, he told the House that the investigation into the murder and the alleged conspiracy to murder President Kennedy was a problem of public interest.

"The investigation of a crime in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana is a public responsibility," the former floor leader for ex-Gov. Jimmie Davis said.

"It is the responsibility of this Legislature to finance the investigation and prosecution of crime as an integral part of the administration of justice in Louisiana."

HE SAID THIS is of local, state, national and international imortance. "I think it transcends the boundaries of Louisiana."

Triche declared, "I am par-

ticularly alarmed, and there are a great many citizens share my view, about the fact that the Orleans Parish district attorney has had to accept private contributions to finance the investigation of this murder.

"It must be financed by public funds. Otherwise, gentlemen, we cannot insure the impartial administration of justice. It matters not, gentlemen, whether the district attorney has a case or not, it matters not if he ever gets a conviction, it matters not if you become emotionally involved on one side or not—it matters that the district attorney has had to accept private contributions to carry on a public function."

REP. EDWARD F. LeBreton of Orleans, a floor leader for Mayor Victor Schiro, took the microphone to declare that Garrison had not consulted any of the Orleans members.

"This finds us from New Orleans a little surprised," LeBreton said. "We knew nothing about this. We heard nothing from Mr. Garrison. I would like to think that if our district attorney wants this, he would have made it known to us.

"Is there any way you can indicate to us why we are not carrying the ball, we find this a little embarrassing," LeBreton said.

Triche replied that he would be glad to wait action on the amendment while LeBreton contacted Garrison, but the House voted anyway.

Rep. Cleve Marcel of Terrebonne Parish elicited from Triche that the latter had been in contact with intermediaries of Garrison.

"IHAVE NOT talked personally with Garrison," Triche said. "He has not requested this. I have not discussed this with Garrison. I have discussed this with intermediaries, who say he does need the funds. I have discussed it with people who have discussed it with Mr. Garrison."

Triche drew support from Rep. Joel Chaisson of St. Charles Parish.

"I certainly believe this to be a request for a worthwhile project," Chaisson said. "I can remember when we were accused by Garrison and I was one who wanted to bring him down here the next day. We couldn't find enough with guts to bring him down.

"He has made some grave accusations against the CIA," Chaisson continued. "Public funds should finance the investigation. We haven't heard anything from the CIA. We should expect to hear something from the CIA."